

News Release

U.S. Department of Education Awards Congressionally-directed Grant to the U of M, Crookston for Center for Rural Entrepreneurial Studies (CRES)

By Itollefs on Thursday, November 18, 2010

The U.S. Department of Education has awarded a \$550,000 congressionally-directed grant to the University of Minnesota, Crookston to establish the Center for Rural Entrepreneurial Studies (CRES). While additional financial support may be sought, currently, 100 percent of the funding will go directly to financing the CRES. The Center, housed in the Business Department, is physically located in 117 Dowell Hall at the U of M, Crookston, a campus known for its strong history of supporting innovation and entrepreneurship in the region.

The CRES will expand connectivity to the region's educational institutions, economic development organizations and financial institutions, as well as to state and federal small business support agencies and aspiring entrepreneurs in Northwest Minnesota. The CRES will launch a Web site this fall and preparations are underway to begin operations in January 2011.

"We are both excited and honored to be the home of this new Center for Rural Entrepreneurial Studies," says Sue Brorson, professor and head of the Business Department at the U of M, Crookston. "Our focus will be on entrepreneurship issues in rural areas, and we will be working to support and to find innovative ways to aide entrepreneurs and small business development."

Small business and entrepreneurship provide a critical economic benefit to the state's economy. In fact, according to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, new and emerging companies, those five years old or less, create 80% of the net new jobs in the state.

The mission of the CRES is to encourage entrepreneurship through educational leadership, applied research, and insightful consulting. The CRES will engage the students, faculty, and research facilities on the Crookston campus in order to stimulate the entrepreneurial culture and strengthen the economic vitality of Northwest Minnesota.

Plans also include developing educational resources for entrepreneurship, engaging students at the U of M, Crookston in entrepreneurial services support and business development activities, connecting faculty and staff with entrepreneurs in the region to provide both expertise and support, and creating conditions favorable for entrepreneurship and business formation in Northwest Minnesota.

"We are grateful to Congressman Collin Peterson and his leadership on this entrepreneurship initiative along with the support of both Senators Al Franken and Amy Klobachar to secure the funding," Brorson says. "It is a great opportunity for us to serve as a focal point for entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in our region and to encourage and support the growth and development of small business through the Center."

Writing the grant was a collaborative effort between several faculty members in the Business Department including Kevin Cooper and Rachel Lundbohm along with Sue Brorson and Bruce Brorson.

Today the University of Minnesota, Crookston delivers 29 bachelor's degree programs, 18 minors, and more than 40 concentrations, including several online degrees, in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of about 1,400 undergraduates from more than 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

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2900 University Ave., Crookston, MN 56716
800-862-6466 | 218-281-6510 | umcinfo@umn.edu

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